IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY THROUGH ROLE PLAY METHOD

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Abstract. This research highlights the speaking ability of the students of *SMA Negeri 3* Parepare. The students were taught through role play method to know the improvement of the students' speaking ability. The data were collected in 2012 by applying quasi-experimental method in which two groups were involved in pre-test and post-test. The research consisted of 43 students from two classes. The finding shows that the students' speaking skill improved significantly. It was shown by the mean score of pre-test was 49.34 and the post-test was 71.304. The result of t-test value in post-test 1.868 was higher than t-table value 1.684. It indicates that H_1 was accepted and H_0 was rejected and the students who were taught through role play method performed better than the students who were taught through conventional method.

Key Words: Improving Speaking, Role Play

INTRODUCTION

After doing a pre-observation at the tenth year students of *SMA Negeri 3* Parepare, the researcher found that the students' speaking performance was still low. The average score of the students' speaking was 55, while the minimum standard of school score is 70. Instead of the average score, the students' score was also classified as poor score if compared to the clasification score by *Dinas Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah*. It was caused by several factors such as the influence of their native language or colloquial language, lack of motivation to practice English, the strategy, material, medium, and method in teaching speaking. This phenomenon drove the researcher to focus on speaking skill.

The researcher tried to apply role play method from many available methods. Moreover, there are many research findings proving that this method is effective to use in teaching speaking. Role play is different from other methods in dialogue, where the students have to memorize the words or sentences that are given to them then formulating sentences in dialogue by using the words given. In role play, the students are given topics or situations to choose, otherwise they may choose a particular topics or situations by themselves. They are free to improvise the particular topic or situation and to improvise their performance by using useful expressions given by the teacher.

From above mentioned rationales, the researcher tried to find out to what extent the use of role play method can improve the speaking ability of the tenth year students of *SMA Negeri 3* Parepare.

Review of Related Literature

Definition of Speaking

Many linguists have definition of speaking. Widdowson (1985:57) states that speaking is a means of oral communication that gives information involves two elements, namely the speaker who gives the message and the listener who receptive the message. Jones in Richard (2008:19) gives his comments, "in speaking and listening we tend to be getting something done, exploring ideas, working out some aspect of the world, or simply being together. In writing, we may be creating a record, committing events or moments to paper". Additionally, Dobson (2005:17) defines conversation as the informal interchange of thoughts and information by spoken words. For one thing, its creator is one person who imagines how two (or more) people might converse, whereas real conversation always develops from the interaction of at least two people.

From those definitions, it can be inferred that speaking is the way to say something intentionally to express opinions or ideas in order to inform, entertain, or persuade someone to make communication or interaction in society.

Teaching Speaking

Kayi (2006:1) explains that teaching speaking is to teach ESL learners to produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns; use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and rhythm of the second language; select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper social setting, audience, situation, and subject matter; organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence; use language as a means of expressing values and judgments; and use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses which are called as fluency.

Those are the purpose of teaching speaking, how the teacher teach ESL learners to understand and produce English well. Now, many linguistic and ESL teacher agree that students learn to speak in second language by interacting (Kayi, 2006). That is why the researcher tries to apply one of interacting methods in her research such role play.

The Characteristics Making Speaking Difficult

According to Brown (2001:270) there are some characteristics of spoken language that can make oral performance easy as well as, in some cases, difficult. They are clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation, and interaction. All of these characteristics may cause the difficulty in speaking because they influence the speaker in pronouncing the foreign language.

Criteria of A Successful Oral Communication

Nunan (1989:32) concludes that successful oral communication involves developing the ability to articulate phonological features of the language comprehensibly; mastery of stress, rhythm, intonation patterns; an acceptable degree of fluency; transactional and interpersonal skills; skills in taking short and long speaking turns; skills in the management of interaction; skills in negotiating meaning; conversational listening skills (successful conversations require good listeners as well as good speakers); skills in knowing about and negotiating purposes for conversations; and using appropriate conversational formulae and fillers. In brief, when someone is able to do all the criteria above, it means that he or she has successed in communication orally.

The Concept of Role Play

According to Harmer (1998:92) role-play activities are those which students are required to imagine that they are in different situations and act them out. For instance, being guests at a party, trainer and trainee in a job interview, travel agents answering customer questions or participants in a public meeting about a road-building project, sho forth. Moreover, Kodotchigova (2001) supports that in role play participants assign roles which they act out within scenario. One way, or another, role play prepares L2 learners for L2 Communication in a different social and cultural context. Dobson (2005:47) also states that "dialogues and improvisations are, in effect, forms of role-playing, which is an engaging device to stimulate students to use their newly acquired English. Thus far, we have spoken of role-playing involving two students only, but of course several people can interact in a role-playing situation. This brings us to the matter of plays. Plays are especially popular activities in conversation clubs where the group has sufficient time to devote to the study, practice, and staging of a play." These arguments are corresponding to Aronson and Carlsmith in Graves' description (2008:4) that trole play is similar to an experiment in which the subject is asked to behave as if he (or she) were a particular person in a particular situation.

From the whole explanations above related to the concept of role play, it can be summarized that role play is a method that make the students feel as another person in a particular situation by improvising and contriving real world in another situation in speaking practice. It helps the students to be easier to speak or interact with others in the classroom by using target language and let the students participate actively in teaching and learning process.

The Advantage of Role Play Method

Many researchers who have done their research in classroom by using role play conclude that role play is an effective method in teaching. According to Cheppy H. C. in Shofiatun (2012), there are many advantages of using role play such as helping the students

behave, think, and feel what the other feels, describing situation of human relationship realistically, expressing history of life to the students, developing the students' imagination, enriching the new things in teaching and learning process, making the feeling and emotion improved in learning, encouraging the students to relate with controversial problems realistically, and it is useful to change behavior.

Furthermore, Docmo (2011) presents some advantages of role play such as: 1) energizing activity/fun to do, 2) allowing participants to contribute actively (even the reserved ones), 3) it is time efficient, 4) experimental learning is more powerful than instructions, 5) delivering complex concepts in a simple manner, 5) requiring less preparation for the teacher/facilitator (unless you want to print out role descriptors).

Those are the advantages of role play in teaching process. Those are hoped to influence the students after learning speaking through role play method.

Tips for Successful Role Play

Kodotchigova (2001) has suggestions about step-by-step guide to make successful role play based on her research, first step is a situation for a role play, where the teacher should select role plays that will give the students opportunity to practice what they have learned. At the same time, it needed a role play that appeal the students. The second is role play design, coming up with ideas on how this situation may develop. The third is linguistic Preparation, at the beginning level, after selecting the appropriate role play and predicting the language needed, it is better to elicit the development of the role play scenario from students and then enrich it. The forth is factual preparation, providing the students with concrete information and clear role descriptions so they could play their roles with confidence. Describing each role in a manner that will let the students identify with the characters. The fifth is assigning the roles, at the beginning level, taking one of the roles and acting it out as a model. Sometimes, the students have role play exercises for the home task. They learn useful word and expressions. Also they will think about what they can say and then act out the role play in the next class. The last is follow-up, spending some time on debriefing. The aim is to discuss what has happened in the role play and what they have learned.

The steps and tips in constructing the role play above are making the researcher decided to formulate the steps of role play that the researcher would use in her research. And the researcher tried to combine the steps and the tips above such as: 1) Explaining how to run the role play, 2) Dividing the students into some groups, 3) Distributing a story to each group, 4) Giving some vocabularies related to the story, 5) Giving a chance for each group for preparing their dialogue and practicing their role with their group before showing it in front of the class, 6) Giving a chance for each group showing their role in front of the class, 7) Giving a chance for students for debriefing time after all

groups performing their dialogue. Its aim was to discuss what the students had done in the role play and what they had to repair of their performance in the next time, either their group or individual.

Role play is a more than just play-acting; it offers changes for rehearsal and engangement that some other activities fail to give (Harmer, 1998:94). Those are the steps that the researcher applied in the treatment.

Conceptual Framework

Teaching method is very important in teaching English. A teacher who always applies variety of techniques or methods in teaching will know what technique is appropriate in the classroom for teaching his/her students to improve their ability. A good teaching technique can arouse the students' interest in learning English language and also can facilitate the students to understand the material. The conceptual framework underlying this research is presented in the following diagram:
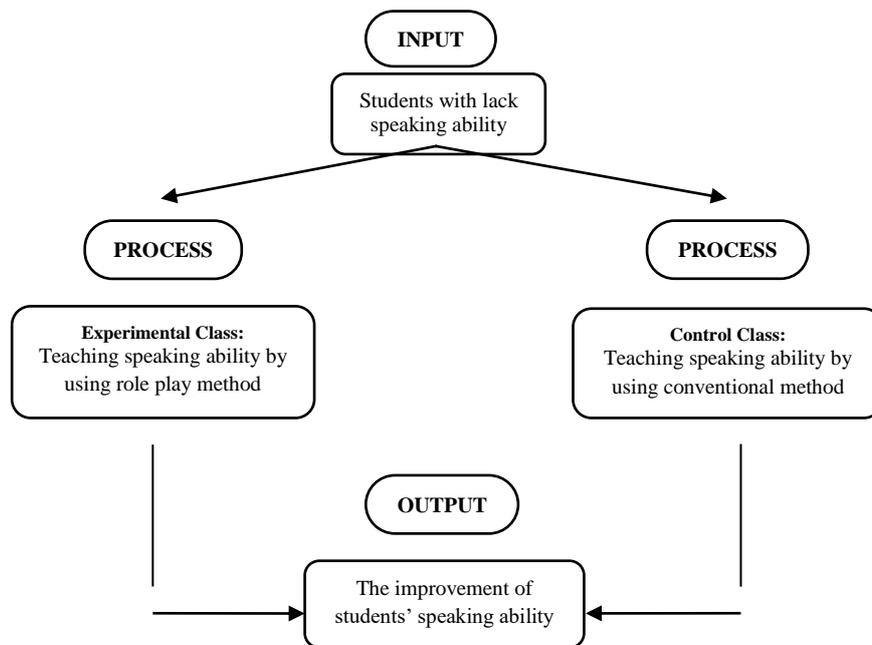
The three variables above include input which refers to the low speaking ability of the students of *SMA Negeri 3* Parepare, process referring two parts including the students of experimental class will be taught the speaking material trough role play method and the the students of control class will be taught the speaking material through conventional method, and output referring to the improvement of students' speaking ability.

HYPOTHESIS

Based on the previous explanation, the researcher had a hypothesis that the speaking ability of the tenth year students of *SMA Negeri 3* Parepare improves significantly through role play method.

METHODS

The researcher employed quasi-experimental design which involved two classes with different treatment, namely experimental class and control class. Where the experimental class received a treatment through role play method, meanwhile the control class was treated through a conventional method.

The population of the research was the tenth year students of *SMA Negeri 3 Parepare* in academic year 2011/2012 which consisted of five classes with the total number of population 101 students. The researcher used cluster random sampling to get two classes from population representing the experimental and control classes. The classes were selected randomly. The number of sample was 43, where the experimental class consisted of 23 students and the control class was 20 students.

To find out the effectiveness of teaching speaking through role play method, the researcher gave speaking tests to the students. The tests consisted of pre-test and post-test. In each test, the students asked the students to retell their unforgettable experience. The researcher used rubric into three criteria consisting of fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility. The data of per-test and post-test were analyzed quantitatively to get the score of each student.

FINDING

After applying role play method in teaching speaking, the researcher found that most of the students who were previously difficult to convey their mind orally could make their dialogue better than before. Even though several students were difficult to pronounce sound /θ/, /ð/, /ɛ/, /ə/, and /æ/ well. Probably, it was caused by their mother tongue or colloquial language. In fact, in Indonesia especially in Bugis clan, there is no sound /ð/, /θ/, and /æ/ but /d/, /t/, /ɛ/, and /ə/ in pronouncing a word. Therefore, the students found difficulty to pronounce those sounds in their dialogue. Nonetheless, their grammatical had an improvement. Previously in the pre-test, they could not distinguish the use of tenses, but in the post-test most of them could tell their experience by using past tense. By comparing the result of the pre-test and post-test and also the process of role play in teaching process, the researcher could conclude that the students' speaking ability improved significantly. The following table reveals the improvement of the students' speaking ability.

a. Scoring Classification of Experimental Class in Pre-Test and Post-Test

No	Classification	Score	Pre-test		Post-test	
			F	(%)	F	(%)
1	Very Good	86-100	-	-	2	8.7%
2	Good	71-85	1	4.35%	12	52.17%

3	Fair	56-70	9	39.13%	7	30.44%
4	Poor	41-55	7	30.44%	2	8.7%
5	Very Poor	<40	6	26.09%	-	-
	Total		23	100%	23	100%

The table above describes that the students speaking skill in experimental class improved. In pre-test, 9 (39%) students were in fair classification, only 1 (4.35%) in good classification, and 6 (26.09%) were in very poor classification. While, in the post-test, only 7 (30.44%) students were in fair classification, 12 (52.17%) students were in good classification, and the rest 2 (8.7%) students were in very good classification. There were no students in very poor classification.

b. Scoring Classification of Control Class in Pre-Test and Post-Test

No	Classification	Score	Pre-test		Post-test	
			F	(%)	F	(%)
1	Very Good	86-100	1	5%	1	5%
2	Good	71-85	2	10%	6	30%
3	Fair	56-70	9	45%	8	40%
4	Poor	41-55	6	30%	3	15%
5	Very Poor	<40	2	10%	2	10%
	Total		20	100%	20	100%

The students in control class also improved, but only a little improvement. There was only 40% improvement of them. Most of them were merely able to reach the fair classification. There was still 1 (5%) student is in the very good classification. In the very poor classification, there were still 2 (10%) students.

c. The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Pre-Test and Post-Test

The Test of Experimental Class	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	49.34	16.72
Post-test	71.304	11.16

This table shows that the students' speaking ability improved in which the mean score in pre-test was 49.34 and the standard deviation was 16.72. In the post-test, the mean score of the students improved up to 71.304 and the standard deviation (11.16) became lower than in pre-test.

DISCUSSION

There are some factors that made the students speaking ability improved. First is the role play method that made them felt as someone else in a particular situation. It is one

of demonstrations of some experts and researchers such as Harmer (1998), Dobson (2005), Aronson and Carlsmith (2008), Kodotchigova (2001), so forth. The second is the materials given to them are familiar for them, such as Malin Kundang story, Sangkuriang story, Timun Mas story, and so on. All characters in the stories were played by the students. They easily played their role because they had comprehended the stories. They were free to improvising the story to be more tragic or comedic. Instead of the stories, the words given were taken from the written stories. They created and improvised their own dialogue. The last is the debriefing time. It has many advantages for the researcher and the students in applying the role play. The students could get some suggestions and critics from the others students to make them better in the next show. The researcher could find what she had to repair in applying the role play.

Before giving treatment, the students mean score was only 49.34 with the standard deviation 16.72. After the treatment, their mean score was 71.304 with the standard deviation 11.16. It indicates that after getting the treatment (role play method in teaching speaking) the students underwent improvement. Most of the students performed more fluently in telling their experience. Their accuracy also became better because before doing the role play, the researcher taught them to pronounce the words related to the story for several minutes. All of these indicate that the role play method was effective to improve the students speaking ability.

Furthermore, the ability in speaking skill was increased with mean scores 71.304 categories as good classification. It means that the total scores between the result of pre-test and post-test were different. The students' scores in post-test were better than those in pre-test. After applying in t-test formula, the result computation of t-test was -1.681 for pre-test and 1.868 for post-test. If we consulted with the t-table value with the degree of freedom (df) N_1-N_2-2= 41 were significantly different. This indicates that the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted because t-test value (1.868) was greater than t-table value (1.684). In brief, the tenth year students of *SMA Negeri 3* pareparre could improve their speaking ability through role play method.

This research was supported by Karman's (2008) research. His research entitled improving speaking ability of the second year students of *SMP Negeri 2* Padakkalawa through role play method found that the use of role play in learning English was able to improve the speaking ability to the second year students of *SMP Negeri 2* Padakkalawa. He used some topics as instrument in applying the role play method. The topics were transactional topics such as shopping lists, buying ticket travel, and many others. It was different with the instrument in this research where the researcher used some stories to play by the students in conducting the role play. In this research, the researcher used stories in role play method to integrate both transactional and interpersonal dialogues to students. However, the two instruments can improve the students' speaking ability. Possibly, Karman used transactional topics as instrument in his research by adapting it with

the students of *SMP Negeri 2* Padakkalawa. This research also adapted her instrument in order to make the students easy to join and enjoy the learning process. Although the instrument and the sample were different, the method that the researchers used was same, role play method. In fact, the role play method actually could improve the students' speaking ability of the two different level schools.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of the study, it can be concluded that using role play method can significantly improve the students' speaking ability of the first year students of *SMA Negeri 3* Parepare. It is proved by the difference between pre-test and post-test results in which the result of the t-test in post-test 1.868 was higher than t-table 1.684. By correlating the result to testing hypothesis, it indicates that null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. Additionally, if the mean score of pre-test and post-test are imported to the required standard score classification of *Dinas Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah*, it shows that the mean score of the pre-test (49.34) is in poor score classification and the post-test (71.304) is in good score classification. Besides, if the mean score of post-test (71.304) is compared with the minimum criteria of mastery (*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal)* which is 70, it also shows that the mean score of post-test is higher. It is evident that the speaking ability of the tenth year students of SMA Negeri 3 Parepare can improve through role play method.

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